

## *The Real Elijah*

22-Jan-08

Dear Johnathan,

In your question, after reading my paper entitled, *Remedy for Withering Branches*, a paper which resoundingly addressed your original issue about the identity of the *angel of the Lord*, you, in typical fashion, merely ignored the answer and sought to surface another issue. Is this because you concede the MSC's rock-solid position regarding the identity of the *Angel of The Lord*? Or, have you not finished reading that document yet? If you finished reading and you disagree, then, instead of advancing a new issue, why not express your evidence to show the reason you used to sustain your views? Instead, you expressed a desire to know more of the identity of the promised Elijah. Either way—despite my dreams of reasonable communications from men of honor—duty requires that I answer your current question in the hopes that you will be more honorable in your discourse. You said the following:

*“What makes you think that the real Elijah won't appear in these last day, when Jesus referred to John the Baptist as the “Elias shall truly come first”, then why did the real Elijah appear with Moses a few days later at the transfiguration with Jesus on the mount with Peter, James and John? Do you think it impossible for God to repeat such an event, when this is the time we should expect to face Glory to Glory, and why not?”*—Your E-mail Sunday, January 20, 2008 10:59 PM

Your suggestion is that Elijah, the Tishbite, the man who ascended to heaven in a chariot after his work was finished will again re-appear to humanity in fulfillment of the Lord's promise of *Matt 17*. This is not a laughable question but one that deserves a careful study. Infact, it shows great respect for the Lord's testimony and a need for a minister to be raised today, as promised, so as to explain by the power of the Comforter the words of Christ, His testimony. In *Matt 17*, the Lord responded to the disciples' question, “**why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?**” —verse 10. Your question has an erroneous predicate which is exposed by the following fact: Elijah did not appear a few days after the Lord's answer to the disciples' question; to the contrary, he appeared on the Mt of transfiguration. hours, if not moments, before the question was posed to Jesus. Therefore, literal Elijah, the man whom the disciples met upon the mountain of transfiguration described early in *Matt 17: 3*, could not have been the one promised in the ensuing verse 11. This is true because Father's voice commanded us—not to memorialize Elijah, but-- to hear Christ. The sequence of events described in *Matt 17* were as follows:

1. **Jesus excluded all others and took only a choice few with Him on a trek up into a high mountain: Peter, James, and John.**
2. **Jesus was transfigured before them.**
3. **Moses and Elijah appeared and began to talk with Jesus.**
4. **Peter interrupted their communion with a suggestion that they erect three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus.**
5. **Father, unseen or unheard beforehand, responded in a way that made the disciples tremble and fall with their faces towards the ground. He did so by pointing the disciples to the Lord and saying that they should memorialize and honor—not Moses and Elijah, the two prophets, but—His beloved son, the One in Whom the Father was well pleased.**
6. **Afterwards Christ bade them to arise from the earth and as they descended from the mountain.**
7. **During their descent, He commanded them to conceal the events that they had witnessed until after “the Son of man” had risen from the dead.**

## *The Mustard Seed Advent*

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8. Then in the very next statement, immediately after the three disciples received their code of silence, a statement recorded in the next verse shows a request for the Lord to explain why the scribes professed that Elijah must first come.
9. All of this sequence is recorded in Matt 17: 1-13.

Consequently, the scribes and the disciples shared your opinion: that the emergence of Elijah, as promised in *Mal four*, was a promise that the literal and actual man would return. Evidently, when the disciples saw Elijah, they presumed that the prophecy of *Mal four* was being fulfilled. It says the following:

*“Remember ye the law of Moses...in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”* —Mal 4: 4-6

More greatly informed Adventist and Davidians have historically taught differently: they have shown that the promise of Elijah prefigured the emergence of a pre-eminent minister to prepare the church for the Lord’s return. This minister’s work will be similar to that of Elijah and John, hence he is called Elijah, or Elijah/John by the MSC. This is not dissimilar to the Lord promising that David will emerge in the last day, or that Assyria will oppress His people. Often times famous names of the past become icons for future events —indeed this is exactly why such people are recorded in the Bible. The MSC will validate this position from the Bible as we proceed. Before so doing, you should understand that Father did indeed approve and joy in the missions of Moses and Elijah; He likewise recognizes and celebrates the voices of inspiration from our SDA recent past, namely that of EGW and VTH. But heaven never intended that such voices of inspired praise for Christ from those “angels” become memorialized and made equal to or greater than the Word. Such voices can only be beneficial as they lead men to turn to the Bible and joy in the words of Christ. Thus, Father said in essence, forget about building your tabernacles of honor; instead, hear the words of My beloved Son. Christ, not the prophets, is to be our “Tabernacle” of truth. It must have been a great shock to the carnal hearts of those three disciples to learn from the mouth of God this simple lesson. Just so, the carnally-minded disciples today who have likewise been taken up the proverbial mountain, those who have ascended higher in their religious journey, Davidians, equally must now become smitten with great pause ---indeed humiliated with faces in the dust of the earth—when they find that Father does not approve of their veneration of His prophets, building monuments of honor to them which are equal to or in excess of their respect for His word. Thus does the MSC resound to the disciples today the same theme that was thundered down from heaven to the handful of favored disciples yesterday: do not exhaust your energies erecting monuments to yesterday’s prophets; they were given to show you the steps back to Christ; He is your life and your salvation; His testimony now must all men hear. In so doing, this will not only save you from the grave, it will also do for you that which it could not do for VTH and EGW: it will make you “*a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations*” —Joel 2: 2. The simple lesson is as follows: you will become greater than all other sin-overcoming humans who, previous to your calling, served heaven, greater than Moses, Elijah, EGW, and VTH. This feat will occur merely by heeding Father’s command and hearing the *Testimony of Jesus* as Christ again raises it up —just as promised—on the last day. Resultantly, the question will not be, should we memorialize VTH & EGW. Instead our issue of burden will be how can we increase Christ so that, in the resurrection when the great men of yesterday’s generations steps out of the grave and behold our power and authority, they will not yearn to erect monuments in honor to us? This speaks to one reason why Elijah must represent a man who was born into this last generation: for the Elijah to come, according to Christ in *Matt 19*, will be the greatest among the disciples; therefore, he is at least two levels greater than the original Elijah. Just as John was the greatest prophet, his antitype will become the highest today. But before the enemy can arouse your pride and covetousness, you must remember the words of

## *The Mustard Seed Advent*

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the Lord. He said that the greatest one is to be your servant and your minister; and beyond that, he likens his service and ministry to that of Jesus'. He said:

*"...Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: EVEN AS THE SON OF MAN came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."—Matt 20: 26-28.*

Elijah comes to restore all things; he is the messenger of the covenant or the promise given 3500 years ago which insured that Christ would restore Israel and do so by hiding Himself upon His Prophet, should Israel falter in their commitment to the covenant. Therefore, Elijah's life work is to be the prime minister who is dedicated to enlightening the disciples so that, together, they can begin to "ransom" Israel. For this he, Elijah does not die, but he dedicates his life, he gives it for this cause. Then, with that mission complete, according to *Luke 14* and elsewhere, he deploys Israel to ransom the world. Just as Jesus received the hidden presence of Christ upon Him so as to perform His ministry, likewise will Elijah accordingly receive the same, as suggested in the above verses. Elijah is a prophet; he bears a message which none others beforehand have borne: he identifies the fathers and the children and urges each to come together in love, to turn their hearts towards each other. This is exactly the duty which the MSC has begun and has sought your help to continue. In fact, almost every letter which it produces finds a way to weave that theme into its body. In fact, Elijah, the author of the MSC has resigned his former, secular employment, his service to the managers of the world, to write these love letters, to give studies, to conduct seminars, to bless Davidia—even against their will—so that you, the forum, and any in Adventism can become enlightened. This has been its servitude! This effort, be not mistaken, is a ministerial assignment. With this fact fastened and locked down, the conclusion is inevitable: Elijah could only be the prime minister which Christ promised would serve His disciples as He, Christ, ministered and served them. Thus, he could only emerge from this generation, from amongst the great people and the strong—that is, if we accept the life-preserving *Testimony of Jesus* to be our light, if we abide by Father's command and hear His Son.

But, in truth, Christ said that Elijah would come. How then can we presume this promise to pertain to someone other than Elijah the Tishbite, the original Elijah? We have at least two reasons directly and plainly from the Lord's own testimony. The first reason stems from the Lord's often-cited promise to revisit His church in the last day and again relay to them His testimony in greater clarity—see *John six, 12*. This promise proves that any analysis given yesterday, the day before "the last day", though it may be the simplest of statements, is certain to be obscured and misunderstood. For the only way to proclaim a Gospel so that it is not understood until a time 2000 years in the future is to hide the intricacies of that Gospel until the appropriate time. For this reason, none on the forum can refute the MSC doctrines; yet, they have never before heard such teachings. The Lord's deployment of this shrewd tactic, the strategy of hiding light until the appropriate time, is exemplified in the Lord's code of silence given to the disciples after their visit to the mountain of Transfiguration. He often hides truth until the disciples are ready to receive it. Coupled with this analysis is the very clear promise from the Lord to handle His testimony differently than the way it was first delivered: He while pointing to the last day, the day when He will raise His testimony again said the following:

*"And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name..."—John 16: 22-26*

Take note to examine the underlined words above: primarily they show the different time periods covered by the Lord's statement, a time depicting our day, today, and also the day when Christ

## *The Mustard Seed Advent*

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walked among His disciples almost 2000 years ago, yesterday. Today is the time when Christ promised in *John six* to raise His word again “in the last day” so as to teach His *disciples indeed* the very same testimony which He gave to them yesterday, but this time with exact clarity and direct explanation. Yesterday, 2000 years ago when Christ spoke—including the *Matt 17* promise of Elijah under question—He did so to them using many proverbs. Your explanation of Elijah reflects the unclear concept received by the disciples thinking that literal Elijah would emerge. The MSC’s explanation, based upon a more careful analysis of the Lord’s word, as you shall see below, represents the clarity which the Lord promised to us today. As a side note to further describe the nuances of both ages, then, the disciples asked nothing in Christ’s name for they could not discern His hidden presence abiding upon Jesus; thus, it was Jesus, the one whom they visualized, that they assumed was the source of their light. Today, when the disciples are educated about Christ by heeding Paul’s counsel and “leaving the principle doctrines of Christ” so that they may advance onward to perfection—See Heb 6: 1—a day when they reject the Papal notion of Tri-Unity, they are to have a different mode of prayer. That is, they reject the false concept that Christ, the Comforter, and God are three personalities in One making them all the same being. Then by the *disciples indeed* denying that fable, they will know the distinctions: they will discern that Father is God and that Christ is His Son, His perfect light. Being thusly educated, they will do as the Lord promised above: they will resultantly ask Christ for absolutely nothing. They will not pray to Christ; instead, all of the petitions of the true disciples—just as promised in the text above—will be directed to Father in Christ’s name. In so doing, they are not asking Christ but merely using His name to win Father’s approval by understanding that Christ is the highest character reference which any could ever cite to Father. In this way the saints will show their respect for God’s government, His authority, by acknowledging the Son, by asking—not in their own names, nor the names of the prophets, but—in Christ’s name. Only in so doing, will all the petitions and prayers of the saints be answered. This will occur to the *disciples indeed*, and it will happen—not in the days of Paul, neither Constantine, nor EGW, nor VTH, but—exactly when the Lord promised, in a different day, “in that day”! It will be the day of perfect joy, a day when no man can overpower us to remove our peace and joy so as to make us sad. It is a day when our “**hearts shall rejoice**”. Remember, “**The Father loveth the Son...for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son Honoureth not the Father...**” —John 5: 20-23. Only this procedure will relieve our sorrow and fulfill our joy. Finally, the above text of *John 16* speaks directly to the Elijah issue because Christ acknowledged to the twelve disciples that during His testimony He spoke in proverbs and that only in a time future to their age, in the last day when He raises His testimony again will He speak to them plainly. This is the first of the two points offered to address your question about Elijah. It shows that when Christ promised to send Elijah, He did so, not with literal speech, but with figurative or proverbial communication, the very style with which He categorized His testimony. The direct, plain, and literal speech, comes in the last day. Furthermore, since Elijah’s commission is to restore all things, then He must be the man to restore in man a correct knowledge of God; thus, it will be through Elijah’s ministry that the disciples will know who the Father, the Son, and the Comforter, as well as the Only begotten are, and how each participate or have participated in the Gospel dispensation.

The proof from another angle that the Lord, when describing the Elijah to come, spoke on a figurative or proverbial—and not a literal—level, comes directly from the very words of Christ’s, *Matt-17* promise. He said, “**Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also THE SON OF MAN suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.**” —Matt 17: 11-13. The phrase “the son of man” in this Text points back to the subject of His study, Elijah. Had not the Lord chosen to conceal the depths of His meaning until the day of your question, it could have just as

## *The Mustard Seed Advent*

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well read, “likewise shall also Elijah suffer of them”. Before more elaboration on this point can be made, it must also be shown that, contrary to what some nominal Adventist teach, Christ clearly intended for all to anticipate a man, a prime minister, a doctrinal restorer, to emerge today. For this reason He gave the promise in future tense, saying, “*Elias shall **TRULY** come first*”. The promise, by the Lord’s very own testimony was not only futuristic, it was also true—not false—for Christ reinforced His testimony by using the adverb, “truly”. He did so foreknowing that many would doubt. He promised that Elijah will come; then, to give all a glimpse of Elijah’s work, the Lord used *John the Baptist* as an icon or an example by saying that Elijah had already come. The Lord pointed to John as a figure to explain that when Elijah truly does come, He will be received the way that this forum has received the message of the Mustard Seed: they will disrespect his authority or “*do unto him whatsoever they listed*”. Therefore even though John was not literally Elijah, Christ calls Him Elijah and uses John’s experience — experiences of which the disciples, some of whom served under John, very well understood—to describe the work of the coming, futuristic, last-day prophet. For this reason does the Lord say, “*likewise shall also the son of man suffer of them*”. Only the rebellious, those who require elongated letters, need more evidence. For those, it must be reinforced that the name, Elijah, merely refers to a man who will again prepare the way of the Lord requiring a double metaphor, Elijah/John, to describe his “last-day” work.

In case you may attempt to articulate the ridiculous and claim that John himself was literally Elijah, the Tishbite, deploying such an assertion to explain the Lord’s allusion to him, you must be preemptively disarmed from such a diabolical sophistry. Speaking of John, the Bible records the following: “**And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priest...to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he saith I am not...**” —John 1: 19-21. If John was actually Elijah, then would not he, himself know it? John said that He was not Elijah but this testimony from him seems to disagree with, not only the angel who promised his birth and gave him his name, but also with the words of Christ. We heard above the words of Christ; now this is what the angel (perhaps Gabriel) promised: “**...thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John...for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord. And shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost,...and many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias**” —Luke 1: 13-17. Thus John, being that he was born months before Jesus and that he did not descend from heaven and being that he was executed after he finished his ministry, proves that he was not the literal Elijah, the one who appeared on the mount of transfiguration only months after *John* was killed. Thus both Christ, Gabriel, and John were correct: John was not Elijah; rather he resembled him, he taught with the same fervor or spirit. Irrefutably then, when Christ referred to John in *Matt 17*, as having come already, He was agreeing with the prophecy that Gabriel foretold, proclaiming that John came in “the spirit and power of Elijah”. This affirms Davidia’s understanding of the Elijah in our day for this is the very expression which EGW in TM 475 and VTH, in quoting that reference, deployed.

*“Of this last message Inspiration warned the Denomination by leaving on record the lines which I shall now read:”*

*“ ‘I saw,’ says Sister E. G. White, ‘angels hurrying to and fro in heaven...preparing for the fulfillment of some important event...this message, seemed to be an additional to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel’s message in 1844’ ---EW, p 277.’ And what should that message be if not an urgent preparation for the judgment of the living”*

*“Again I read: ‘Prophecy must be fulfilled. The Lord says “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet...” Somebody is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah...”---TM, p. 475” —VTH, 2TG 43: 10, 11 [a “legal” and “sane” (5A29) employment of his work]*

## *The Mustard Seed Advent*

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Do any dare disagree that the episode on the *Mount of Transfiguration* was the exciting event which inspired the disciples, immediately after the Lord commanded them to be silent regarding the events on the mountain, to ask, “**why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?**” Venturing further, can any Bible student assert that this query did not evoke the Lord’s oft repeated reply stated in the very next verse, the promise of Elijah’s coming to restore all things. This being factual, then several logical conclusions are inevitable: **(1) Father did not want us to anticipate literal Elijah; else, He would have accepted Peter’s desire to commemorate Elijah. (2) He pre-scripted every word which Christ uttered and such words have caused us to anticipate the emergence of a future Elijah. (3) We are given two seemingly opposing directives from Father: to hear Christ and to commemorate the future, Antitypical Elijah. (4) The literal Elijah who appeared on the mount did not restore all things. (5) The Elijah of Jesus’ Testimony will indeed restore all things.** Resultantly, how can we expect the figurative Elijah who is to emerge today, and still heed the Father’s command to hear the Son? Are not the two statements opposing? Such a feat can only occur if, today, Elijah resounds the very testimony of Christ, the same words which Father commanded all of His disciples to hear. This did not EGW or VTH do; consequently, we are in violation of Father’s directly articulated commands should we continue in our zeal to erect equal tabernacles for EGW, VTH, and Christ. However, the MSA is not asking any to make a monument to its work; instead, it echoes the Father and Christ’s statements by urging all Davidians to Hear the Son, to embrace the Testimony of Jesus. It willingly fulfills the *John-the-Baptist* commission, it willingly decreases its reputation in order to increase that of Christ. Essentially, Elijah/John or the Mustard Seed being the antitype, is the real Elijah. He is the reason why the work of the others were recorded.

To Summarize, the promised Elijah which both EGW and VTH predicted, the promise based upon Christ’s Testimony recorded in *Matt 17*, does not refer to Elijah the Tishbite for the following reasons:

- **The antitype is the real Elijah, the others were exemplary to describe his work.**
- **He is the greatest of all the disciples qualifying him to be their minister and their servant. Thus, since the *disciples indeed* are men of greater stature than those men of prior generations, our Elijah in the last day must excel in greatness over the work of the Tishbite.**
- **The Lord professed that He spoke to His original disciples by using proverbs, and the promise of *Matt 17* has been proven to be an example of such figurative speech.**
- **The Elijah promise is cast as a double metaphor describing a merger of the ministries of the Tishbite and John. Therefore, those who anticipate the literal Elijah should, out of consistency, anticipate that the Literal John is to emerge.**
- **We are commanded to hear Christ; therefore, being here-to-fore unknown until His identity is established, we are not to memorialize any other prophet. Thus, Elijah/John must unfold the Testimony of Jesus in a more profound way, only in this way can we anticipate his emergence and still abide by the Lord’s commands.**

Finally, Johnathan, your reference to *Mal three* to advance your presumption that Elijah’s return will be literal, whereby you place special emphasis on the word “appear”, does not fortify your theory. The term appear is not so definitive that we should restrict it to mean emerged out of thin air. The messenger of the covenant will indeed emerge on the scene as the MSA has done; however, it did not come down from heaven. It has emerged, as promised, out of the earth from its here-to-fore hidden place —See *Isa 49*. I would like to discourse further pertaining to these issues; however, my zeal to not over tax those who will read this compels me to bring this study to a close. If you call in on Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, and hear my 7:00 EST study, I will try to venture forth to even more greatly explain this issue.

Sincerely,

# *The Mustard Seed Advent*

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Derek W. West